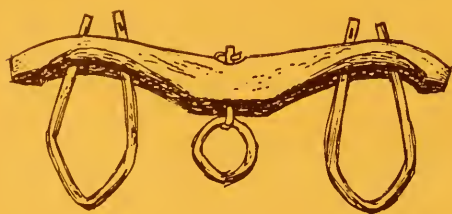


LINCOLN'S ELLSWORTH LETTER

MAY 25th, 1861

LINCOLN ROOM



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Marion D. Pratt Estate

To Harry E. Pratt

Not only a generous helper
in my studies but always
a rare and delightful friend

Frederick H. Hesse

New York

May 20. 1953





ABRAHAM LINCOLN
(Merve No. 35)

LINCOLN'S
Ellsworth Letter

AND ALSO THE LAST LETTER
FROM COLONEL ELLSWORTH
TO HIS FATHER AND MOTHER

Privately Printed
NEW YORK
1916

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FOREWORD.

ON May 24th, 1861, a month and a half after Sumter surrendered and nearly two months before the first battle of Bull Run, President Lincoln's friend, Colonel Ephraim Elmer Ellsworth was shot in Alexandria, Virginia, by Jackson, the proprietor of the Marshall House, after the impetuous young man had torn down a confederate flag from the top of the building. His body was taken to the White House and lay in state in the East Room. He was the first officer killed in the War of the Rebellion. The President on the following day wrote a letter of sympathy to the sorrowing father and mother.

Ellsworth was a New York boy. At the age of twenty-two he was Adjutant-General of the State of Illinois. In 1859 he studied law in Lincoln's office in Springfield. He organized in Chicago the military company known as Ellsworth's Zouaves, and in 1860 toured the country holding competitive drills with various military organizations. When Lincoln came to Washington Ellsworth accompanied him, and in April in New York he organized and, although but twenty-four, became the Colonel of the 11th

New York Infantry, known as the Fire Zouaves, as the regiment was recruited principally from the Fire Department of New York City.

This beautiful tribute is perhaps the most touching of all the letters written by Lincoln. He was writing of a man whom he knew and loved. The letter does not reach the lofty tone of that to Mrs. Bixby of Boston, or the Gettysburg address, but in the choice of fitting words to stricken parents regarding a son and personal friend, few letters have ever been written that may compare with it.

By the courtesy of Mr. Judd Stewart, in whose notable collection of Lincolniana is the original letter, a fac-simile is shown here.

The photograph of Lincoln is printed directly from a negative, believed to be the original, made by C. S. German, in Springfield, Illinois, early in 1861, just before the President-elect went to Washington. That of Ellsworth is printed directly from the original negative made by M. B. Brady, probably during the time when the Fire Zouaves were being organized.

FREDERICK HILL MESERVE.

New York, February 15, 1916.

THE LETTER

Washington D.C.

May 25. 1861

To the Father and Mother of Col.
Elmer E. Ellsworth:

My dear Sir and Madam,

In the untimely
loss of your noble son, our affliction
here, is scarcely less than your own.
So much of promised usefulness
to one's country, and of bright hopes
for one's self and friends, have rarely
been so suddenly dashed, as
in his fall. In size, in years, and
in youthful appearance, a boy
only, his power to command men,
was surpassingly great. His power,
combined with a fine intellect, an
indomitable energy, and a taste al-
together military, constituted in him,
as seemed to me, the best natural
talent, in that department, I ever knew.

And yet he was singularly modest and deferential in social intercourse. My acquaintance with him began less than two years ago; yet through the latter half of the intervening period, it was as intimate as the disparity of our ages, and my engrossing engagements, would permit. To me, he appeared to have no indulgence or partialities; and I never heard him utter a profane, or an intemperate word. What was conclusive of his good heart, he never forgot his parents. The honors he labored for so laudably, and, in the sad end, so gallantly gave his life, he meant for them, no less than for himself.

In the hope that it may be no intrusion upon the sacredness of your sorrow, I have ventured

to address you this tribute to the
memory of my young friends, and
your loved and early fallen child.

May God give you that consolation
which is beyond all earthly
power.

Sincerely yours friend
in a common affliction -

A. Lincoln





E. ELMER ELLSWORTH

Colonel 11th N. Y. Infantry

THE LETTER FROM COLONEL
ELLSWORTH TO HIS FATHER
AND MOTHER WRITTEN ON THE
NIGHT BEFORE HIS DEATH.

Head quarters 1st Louisiana
Camp Lincoln.

Washington D.C.

May 23rd 61

My dear Father and Mother

The Regt
is ordered to move across
the river tonight - We have
no means of knowing what
reception we are to meet with.
I am inclined to the opinion
that our entrance to the city
of Alexandria will be not
contested. I am f

formed a large force have
arrived there to day - Should
this happen my dear parents
it may be my lot to
be injured in some man-
ner. Whatever may happen
cherish the consolation

that I was engaged in the
performance of a sacred
duty - and tonight thinking
over the probabilities of the
~~future~~ ~~the occurrences of the~~
past I am perfectly content
to accept whatever my for-
-tune may be. Confident that
he who nothing even the
fall of a sparrow ~~will~~ will
have some purpose even in
the fate of one like me -

My darling & ever loved
parents, good bye. God bless
protect & care for you.
Eunice

Twenty-five copies are printed containing
the fac-simile of the Lincoln letter, and also
life photographs of Lincoln and Ellsworth,
and in addition a photographic copy of
the last letter of Ellsworth to his parents.

No. *Proof Copy*

Frederick Hiel Moser

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